Making A FEMINIST INTERNET

the zine

APC
ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS

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Credits

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"Thank you" seems too small a phrase to say to all the MFI Africa convening participants, but your presence, conversations and openness about your work and lives means so much to us. Thank you for allowing us to share space and be vulnerable together in making and doing a feminist internet. This zine wouldn't have been possible without APC'S WRP team, and Jac and Sharm — y'all are the best!

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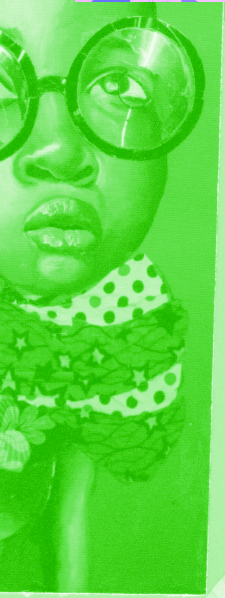
Opening notes

What happens when you ask a gathering of fifty feminists from across Africa to illustrate their relationship with power in relation to internet access?

You get some pretty dope avatars.



What do we recall about the first time we went online? What was the first thing we searched on the internet that we didn't want our mothers to know? What information have we been unable to find due to limited content and connectivity, surveillance, censorship, exploitation and unequal representation? How can we use the internet if when trolls target our identities, political values and lived experiences? How do we sustain the growth, leadership and ethically representative visibility of our different movements online? Is there porn we can watch that centres our pleasures, rather than the patriarchal gaze?

These are some of the questions that came up at the Making a Feminist Internet: Africa convening, held in Johannesburg at the end of October 2019.

continued on next page

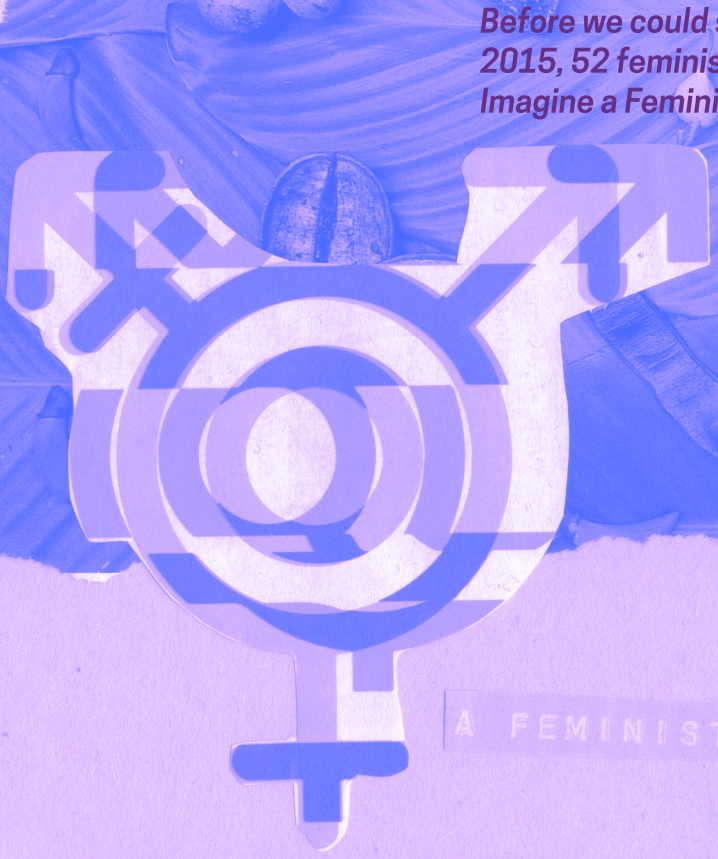
This zine documents the explorations and experiments that grew in even more questions on what it means to have a feminist internet i for you to digest, short bits about feminist organisations we found breaking timeline of African feminist-ing on the internet, a playlist for you to tune in to :) and more!

So, what are the Feminist Principles

Have you ever looked for something on t you need is hidden behind a paywall, blo Have you ever been targeted for sharing political opinion, on the internet? Are yo and living your best life on social media experience that makes you think, "Hey, or Z was considered?" Well, if you do, th still for you).

Before we could start Making A Feminis 2015, 52 feminists from different parts Imagine a Feminist Internet convening. mapping out what a dr iteration of the Femini tenets that encapsula Feminist Principles of expanded and translat convenings. At presen five thematic clusters

A



nto dynamic answers, solutions and
n Africa. There are long prose pieces
out about at the convening, a ground-
of African and African diaspora music

of the Internet?

the internet and found that the content
cked by your ISP or otherwise censored?
a fire-fire photo of yourself, or perhaps a
u ever just minding your own business
when you receive an unsolicited dick pic? Is there any other
using the internet could be a much better experience if X, Y
is resource is for you (and even if you don't, this resource is

t Internet, we had to imagine what it could look like. In April
of the world met in Port Dickson, Malaysia, for the first
For three days, these feminists collaborated on a project
eam internet would look like. From this came the first
ist Principles of the Internet (FPIs): a guiding set of 15
te the vision for a feminist internet. Since then, the
the Internet have been workshopped, complicated,
ted into various languages at subsequent APC-WRP
t, there are 17 principles, which have been grouped into
:

CCESS

EXPRESSION

MOVEMENTS

ECONOMY

EMBODIMENT

What does a feminist internet in Africa look like?

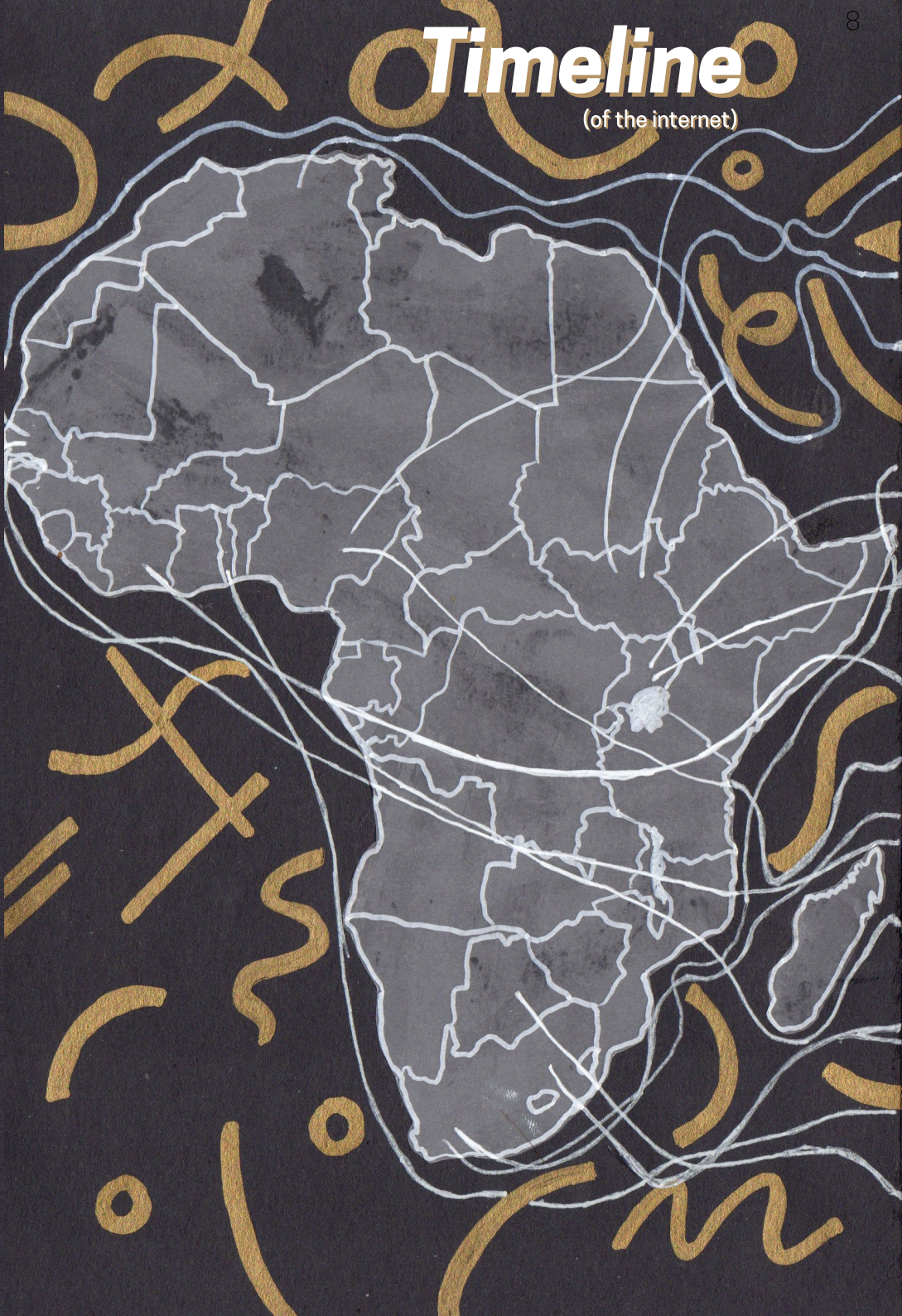
As this was the first Feminist Internet convening in Africa, the women human rights activists, digital safety trainers, donors, artists, academics and free radicals in attendance had much ground to cover. Over the course of the week, the following ideas developed around what was needed to make and use the internet in ways that prioritise the lived experiences of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora:

- ♥ Intentional inclusion
- ♥ Collaboration with feminist tech activists
- ♥ Dissemination of the FPIs to encourage ownership
- ♥ Innovative temerity to create a feminist internet
- ♥ Incorporating healing practices
- ♥ Documenting, archiving and being completely extra, from a place of pleasure and power
- ♥ Not taking for granted our relative power and privilege
- ♥ Active involvement in feminist infrastructures of alternative internets, like community networks
- ♥ Intergenerational advisory and solidarity groups
- ♥ Appreciating and recognising all the work that has been done before
- ♥ Points of connection within feminist networks — finding the common fight
- ♥ Grounding young people's education in feminist principals
- ♥ Creating and sustaining strong offline support systems
- ♥ Being intentionally and consistently (not conveniently) present in our work
- ♥ Mapping out feminist movements and our different forms and languages of knowledge
- ♥ Breaking away from NGO-model organising and imagining creative ways of working together
- ♥ Sharing accountability mechanisms and governing structures
- ♥ Creating awareness, for those who don't know, that spaces like this exist
- ♥ Making or finding feminist porn, and other forms of pleasure if porn is not your thing

Mapping
who is out there
SORROW
That Old Chestnut
Cyberspace
the
adventure
WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

Timeline

(of the internet)



1932 - Mathematician and educator, Grace Alele-Williams is born. she's the first Nigerian woman to recieve a doctoral degree and be vice-chancellor at a Nigerian university

1941 - Agar Gum, South Sudanese song composer + military leader of the Sudan People's Liberation is born

1956 - senegalese, Rose Dieng-Kuntz is born + went on to pioneer the internet, esp AI knowledge

1984 - In Algeria, feminist protest against the Family Code. In South Sudan, Katiba Banat formed

1995 - African Gender Institute formed in South Africa

1996 - Afchix founded in Uganda

1997/8 - WomensNet founded in South Africa

2000 - Women of Uganda Network [WOUGNET] founded

2006 African Feminist Charter ☺

2007 - Femmes & TIC formed in Cote d'Ivoire

2014 - #BringBackOurGirls

2014 - Black Girls Tech London meet-up

2015 - #RapeAtAzaniaHouse; #MugabeFalls

2015 - Female Genital Mutilation banned in The Gambia

2015 - Emefa Ameyo Kpegba wins 'Women in Tech' Innovation Award in Togo.

2016 - #Chapter 212; #RURefList; #RapeAtJunction

2017 - #RhodesWar

2018 - 'Doyna' campaign against GBV in Senegal And Dr Stella Nyanzi arrested in Uganda. South Sudan women sit @ peace table

2019 - #JusticeForZinedine and internet blackout in Zimbabwe, and Hajar Maissouni arrested for abortion in ~~Morro~~ Morocco

Queer history + activism

1990 - Gays + Lesbians of Zimbabwe formed

1991 - First Johannesburg Pride March

1995 - Bev Ditsie first to address UN on lesbian + gay issues

2003 - Coalition of African Lesbians founded

2004 - Sexual Minorities Uganda formed

2010 - Queer African Youth Network formed in Senegal / West Africa

2011 - First edition of QAYN's Q-zine launched

APC history

1990 - APC founded ISP's for activists

1993 - WNSP (APC) founded

1995 - Beijing WNSP computer tent

2004 - Women's Electronic Network Training (WENT Africa)

2005 - First paper published on online VAW

2006 - First Take Back the Tech campaign

2007 - Second WENT Africa held

2008 - First feminist tech exchange [FTX] + AWID held

2011 - EROTICS research

2014 Imagine a feminist internet held

2016 - Feminist ~~Tech~~ Internet exchange hub @ AWID

2019 - Making A Feminist Internet: Africa ☺

WRP

One of the foundational activities we undertook during the convening was a collaborative memory project that documented the people and events that shaped our present lives and livelihoods. This timeline is an edited version of the one created at MFI Africa, and shows African (and diaspora) feminist's place in the creation of the internet, in science and activism. As you look through it we encourage you to make this a growing project by inserting your own memories, labour, experiences and anecdotes. Making a feminist internet is an ongoing labour of love, and creating an alternative chronology of key moments forms part of this project.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

As we were putting together this zine, we realised that one of our first personal experiences of online movement building was the growth of the #RhodesMustFall movement into #FeesMustFall. When the University of Cape Town finally conceded to taking down the statue of Cecil John Rhodes in April 2015, it was clear that they thought it would be the end of students' discontent. But the move towards decolonisation didn't end there. Country-wide student movements organised around particular but similar causes, disseminated information through Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp (if only we knew about Signal!), and in October 2015, we collectively decided to shut down almost every tertiary education campus in South Africa. The everyday relationships we forged over practical matters like food, protection from the police and violence men in the organisation, and engagement with university management and the state laid bare the strengths and tensions of online movement building.

Many of us are familiar with online political organising and movement building in the 21st century through movements mobilised through hashtags on social media. At MFI Africa, Selam and Maimuna — amongst other members who come from regions where armed conflict is a daily reality — spoke about the pitfalls of feminist organising in person, and how movement building online offered them a space to find other feminists. We spoke to them about IRL and URL feminist organising in their countries, and why they do what they do.

Online movement building with

Maimuna Jeng and Selamawit Chaka

Maimuna Jeng is a Gambian blogger who writes about religion, society and the different levels of oppression Muslim women encounter within misrepresented or problematic religious contexts. She has also worked with local communities through formal organisations on the intersection between governance, law, policy, and other aspects of women's rights and freedom of expression in the Constitution, and in the Gambia at large.

From her experiences, she co-founded Equals Now, a feminist collective that organises informal offline platforms that bring women together at different levels of their feminism to talk about the issues they are going through in their society, many of which are still taboo to talk about too loudly, like sexuality, intimate partner violence, freedom and expression and multilayered identities.

Because of her work, Maimuna has a developing interest in digital rights. "I do most of my advocacy or feminism online through my Twitter and my blog, and I've been experiencing different forms of abuse and online GBV that have made me realise that the fight that needs to be done offline also needs to happen online."

Attending MFI Africa was therefore important for this different phase of her advocacy. "I am learning how to make online spaces safer for women, and how to use these spaces to mobilise and bring feminists together, especially in the Gambia, where there is no structured and sustained online feminist movement," she explains. So far, it is just different people online doing their thing, and I think the only time collective online activism works for us is when organisations host twitter chats and require online participation of other mainstream organisations present online, and we all just become a part of that. Offline, feminist organising seems to be controlled by a closed group of women — a secretariat or organisation members — who usually benefit from opportunities that have to do with women empowerment and digital equality."

These gatekeeping strategies are one of the reasons why she and her friends founded Equals Now.

"It really doesn't make sense if it's just the same group of women benefiting from the same opportunities. We talked about that at the convening — you cannot represent all women in society because people have different experiences and you cannot be a voice for women on all platforms so you should make space for them to speak for themselves. Equals Now is a more relaxed safe space for women to come together, and we're trying to build a movement of feminists in Gambia, so that we can strategize on how to be a community and a loud voice, so that the government especially can take us seriously."

Selamawit T. Chaka is also a feminist blogger and advocate in Ethiopia, and a former program assistant and social media coordinator at Earuyan Solutions, a feminist social enterprise in Ethiopia that is a custodian of africanfeminism.com. Thanks to her work at African Feminism under the custodianship of Earuyan and Rotaract, she has received two prestigious fellowships from Safe Sisters and MiLEAD. Safe Sisters fellows are required to give presentations on assigned topics; Selam's topic was online GBV, how to mitigate it and the different actors working on this issue. Nine months into her research, she was first introduced to the FPIs and Take Back the Tech.

"Safe Sisters is a fellowship program for women human rights defenders, journalists, and activists that trains them to be able to understand and respond to the digital security challenges they face in their work and daily life," Selam explains. "It is done through a combination of self-study, tool practice, mentorship, workshops, and small grants. They also teach us how to be our sisters keeper whenever online GBV happens and how to stand in solidarity."

As a social media coordinator, Selam learned how to protect the accounts she runs, including her personal one, from being compromised, as had happened a few times before. "Then you need to submit a proposal for funding to implement a project when you return home. I first met with the fellows who were selected for the program on the way to the training program, and we merged our individual projects so we could

work together on digital security training for high school girls."

At MFI Africa, Selam repeatedly mentioned that there is yet to be a sustained feminist movement in Ethiopia.

"There are movements that have been sustained, and have had successful outcomes, such as 16 Days of Activism and Pagume activism led by The Yellow Movement. But I think we still have a long way to go, especially compared to other African countries. I do remember when feminists collectively showed solidarity with the press secretary of the prime minister when she asked that media houses stop prefixing her name with 'Woizerit' (Ms.) or 'Weizero' (Mrs.), and she received considerable backlash. Last year, we also fought to stop early marriage in Tigray."

"We struggle to work as collectives."

Still, she says, progress is slow. "We struggle to work as collectives."

The economic conditions of the digital environment in Ethiopia are not helping. A trained economist, Selam believes that considering the economy as one of the feminist principles of the internet means unlearning what orthodox economics and capitalism taught us and creating an enabling environment with intervention to provide access to all people in a fair price. She is concerned about the current state of the growing digital economy, where our data are being sold for ads, and corporates are taking advantage of rising unemployment rates and remote working conditions by paying lower wages and cutting off health and pension benefits for those they still employ.

"In Ethiopia, as we go through new reform in which we are so inspired by capitalism, we should be careful not to romanticize the digital economy. It's time to stand up and hold the government accountable for the privacy of our data, as well as our social security. The gender gap on the internet is already quite big, and I believe the Ethiopian government is going to drive the economy to a more profit-oriented and corporate control scheme, which will make it even bigger. We need to create a more inclusive and accountable system."

Short bits: Th

South Africa

The #TotalShutdown (TTS) is a feminist movement that grew across South Africa in 2018 as women and queer people organised against gender based violence and femicide. #TTS works on state policy development, ensuring that the government recognises GBV as a state of emergency in South Africa, and making it a priority in its agenda in terms of state funding as a result.

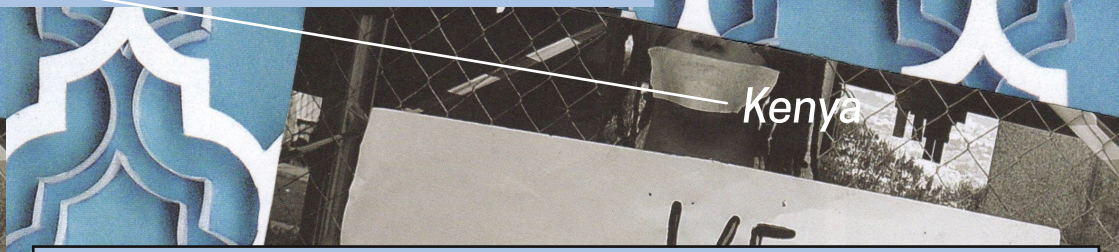
On 1st August 2018, thousands of protestors across South Africa marched against gender-based violence and femicide under the banner of the Total Shutdown, and submitted a memorandum of twenty-four demands to President Cyril Ramaphosa. The #TTS march was largely organised across digital platforms — feminists organised and lobbied on Facebook and Whatsapp, and later developed the Twitter and Instagram hashtag, #TheTotalShutdown. Later, 24 demands, each with its own deadlines, were developed and delivered in a memorandum to the president of South Africa. “We collectively came up with those demands under our hashtag,” said Unathi, a #TTS activist.

Unathi believes that the narrative of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) in South Africa needs to consciously amplify feminist struggles and voices. She recalls her experience of political organizing in 2010, when disadvantaged women communities felt left out because “everything was happening in the digital space and people weren’t meeting face-to-face,” she said. The goal of the movement was to mobilize on a national level, but unequitable access to digital spaces proved to be a challenge.

The 4IR has been a hot topic in South Africa, and as much as it is touted as the economic revolution to equalise economic disparities, its implementation in South Africa has been in pockets of wealthy industries and communities, and without a clearly feminist agenda.

“But if we really wanna have a better future, we need to force the government to priortise the fourth industrial revolution agenda with feminist principles."

e Total Shutdown



Eight months later, on 8th March 2019, International Women's Day, protestors across Kenya similarly gathered to call on the government to develop an action plan to prevent gender-based violence and hold perpetrators accountable. The organisers, Feminists in Kenya (FIK), published an open letter and a list of demands on Medium.

"We followed what was going on in South Africa — the news, the marches — and we stood in solidarity with them," says Nancy Houston, one of the founders of FIK. "But we have the same problem happening in Kenya, and there has been little amplification and visibility from powerful people and organisations around it on a national scale. So, as young feminists, we decided to round up as many people as we could. We called the movement #TotalShutdownKE, which we picked up online, because of how it took off in South Africa — we thought it could also gain momentum in Kenya, thus giving this issue significant visibility."

Just like TTS happened in a number of cities and towns across South Africa, #TotalShutdownKE happened in Nairobi, Kisumu, Busia and Mombasa. "Once they saw the online campaign gain momentum, different organisations reached out to us to offer funding because we did not have the capacity nor the means to conduct the marches," Nancy explains.

FIK, which was founded in November 2018, is a non-organisational, non-formalised movement of young feminist activists that do radical and alternative ways of organising. Its members wanted to run away from the trappings of formal organising, particularly the bureaucracy.

"We do not even have office space, but we believe that what we do is still work. We host offline conversations with more formal organisations about feminism, radical sisterhood and our lived realities."

continued on next page

Built on the recognition that young feminists see the internet as a huge platform through which they can express their opinions and do their work, FIK wants digital activism to receive the attention and compensation it deserves.

"What we're grappling with is the fact that people in government and formal organizations hardly recognise that digital activism and online content creation is work. Millennial feminists do, because we are part of the demographic that is most likely to be unemployed, and most likely to have significant mental health issues because of our struggling economy and the crippling weight of capitalism. We are angry, and we have the internet," Nancy elaborates.

"Feminist organisations need to recognise that online platforms are our alternative spaces of organising. This is why TotalShutdownKE was really profound: because it started online, and moved from social media to being a solid offline movement."

This erasure of young feminist labour, however, was demonstrated in the aftermath of the march, where "a number of politicians reached out to us to start something called the #HerLifeMatters campaign,"

explained Nancy.

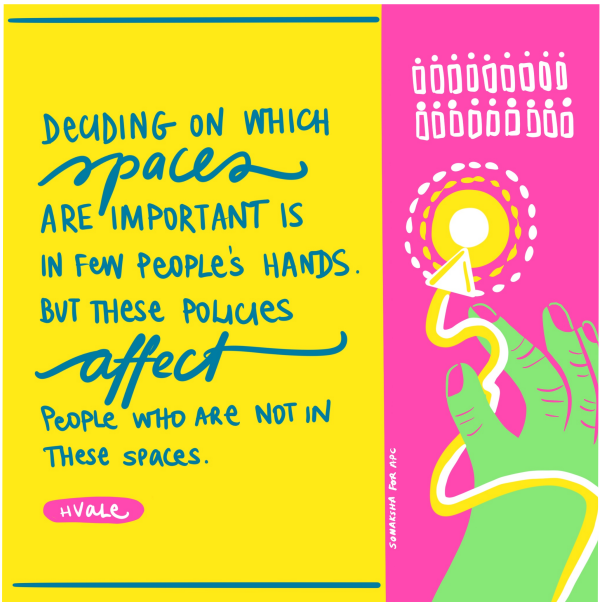
She continued: "During the organisational stages, we realised that our labour as young feminists was pushed to the side because we did not have close proximity to power. We are not powerful, we're just young people shouting about our issues, but we were collaborating with people with power and resources so it was very easy to be spoken over."

Different organisations and politicians claimed to support their memorandum, but they wouldn't let them speak for themselves.

After the campaign's main event at the University of Nairobi in May, none of them would get back to FIK to continue the conversation.

"We've had to quickly learn about the difficulties of trying to collaborate with people who will not listen to us."

Nonetheless, FIK is currently working towards getting the Kenyan government to declare GBV and femicide a national emergency. From a legal perspective, this is likely to ensure that more resources and efforts are directed towards addressing the problem, and to shape policy and donor politics on a national, regional and global scale.



As for online organising, FIK has been a part of collaborations such as #DearSurvivor, an online campaign in support of survivors of sexual violence, during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

As we shared our varying contexts and experiences of online organising, personal and community security were a consistent concern in our conversations. How do we make connections with each other when some are deemed illegal because of their/our gender and sexuality? How do we organise without state interference? Although we have different but same-same encounters with internet trolls, misogynists, government loyalists and other repressive forces, many of us had little knowledge about digital safety tools and tips available to us. At MFI Africa, we had our first chance to meet and speak to badass digital safety trainers, like H.

Digital safety, digital rights with H

H is a digital safety trainer based in Kampala, Uganda. She first heard about the feminist internet at a forum hosted by African Women in Development (AWID) although the jargon was unfamiliar to her. "At AWID, they were already talking about online feminist movement building, and that's when I got the gist of what this was and how they were shaping it. I attended a session on Take Back the Tech, and we had a Q&A exchange with the participants."

H attended AWID after working with APC on the Feminist Tech Exchange Safety Reboot, a curriculum for digital safety trainers who work with women's rights and sexual rights activists to use the internet safely, creatively and strategically.

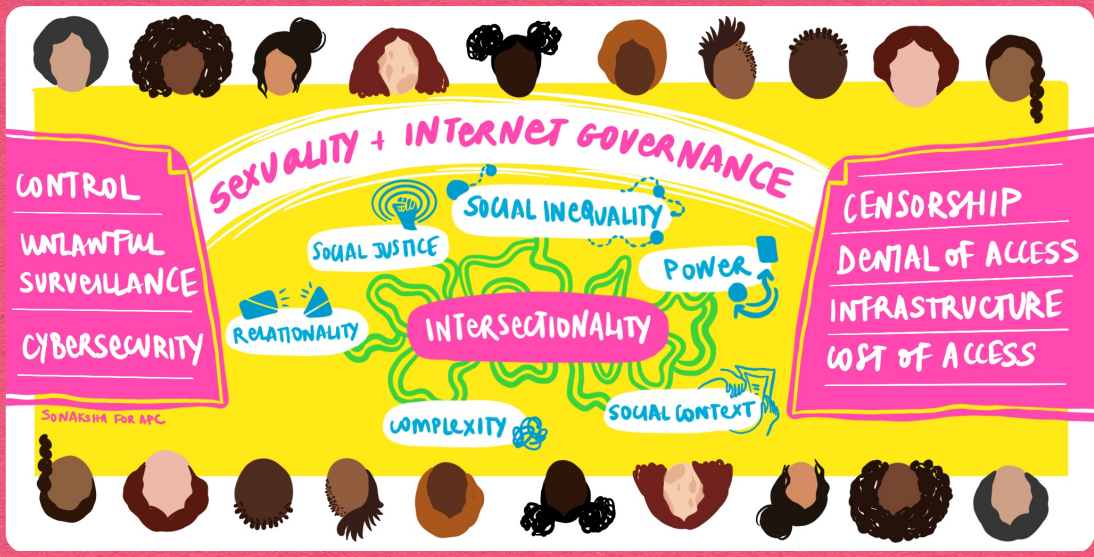
"I have been testing it since 2016, and we've come a long way with different participants." H says about her involvement. Feedback from the testing has been positive, mainly because there is nothing like it.

"As a digital safety trainer, there are topics with a standard curriculum in place such as encryption or mobile safety. But how can you cover online GBV? This is why the FTX: Safety Reboot is

important, because it breaks down this huge relatively new subject and walks you through how to teach it: start with this activity, these are the materials you will need, this is the game you can play, you can project this image, you can ask them these questions [...] It is really unique because you have questions and answers in one place. It's fun and written in an engaging language. I think the writers did a really, really good job."

H has also emphasized the continuities between online and offline safety as she has experienced them in her own work.

In 2013, she was part of the team that worked on curricula for assessing risk, threat modeling, and developing community trust networks.



"My ideal security and safety training programme would be a combination of both online and offline safety knowledge. The two go hand-in-hand and it's sad because we don't spend enough time in training sessions to talk about physical safety and how it relates to digital safety."

As part of her contribution to MFI: Africa, H compiled the following digital safety resources as a starting point for any of us who want to know more about our privacy and security on the internet →

Digital safet

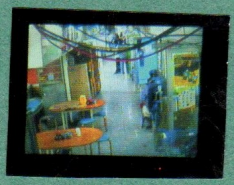
General

1. Safe sister: Common sense guide to digital security

Safe Sisters is a fellowship program for women human right's defenders, activists and media practitioners that trains them to respond to the daily digital safety challenges, and threats to their online bodies.

2. Cyberwomen

Cyberwomen is an online and free-to-download guide for beginners in digital security and safety, as well as for professional trainers. This guide helps activists, women human rights defenders and media workers to safeguard their data, work and sources.



Tools & Tactics

1. Security in a box

Security in a box offers a vast array of toolkits for both individuals and communities at risk. For example, they offer a digital safety toolkit for LBGT activists in sub-saharan Africa, step-by-step digital security tools for Windows users, and how to monitor your privacy on social media.

2. Me and My Shadow

This website helps individuals track their online privacy through looking at personal digital traces left on the internet, and how to stop your metadata landing in the hands of big tech and corporate companies.

3. Keepassx

Keepassx is a password manager that secures usernames, passwords, urls and attachments in one secure database. It also generates passwords for users.

y resources

4. Flowcrypt

Flowcrypt offers users simple and easy email encryption to ensure secure communication. This extension seamlessly integrates with Gmail and other webmail hosts.

5. Google Play and Fdroid

When downloading applications on any device, use Google Play or Fdroid. Fdroid is a catalogue of free and open source software for Android users.

6. uBlock

When pesky and often times dangerous adverts pop up on screen, use Ublock to block them. This is an extension for whatever device you're working on.

Chrome Firefox

7. Panopticlick

This website shows you how safe your browser is by doing a real-time test on whatever device you use. It checks your digital fingerprint by looking at how much information your browser releases about you (such as screen size and language used).

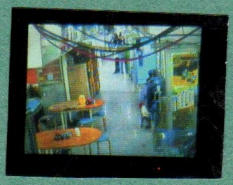
8. TorBrowser

TorBrowser is one of the safest and least 'fingerprintable' browsers to use. Always download Tor Browser from the Tor website, and do not trust other third-party websites.

Chrome Manual

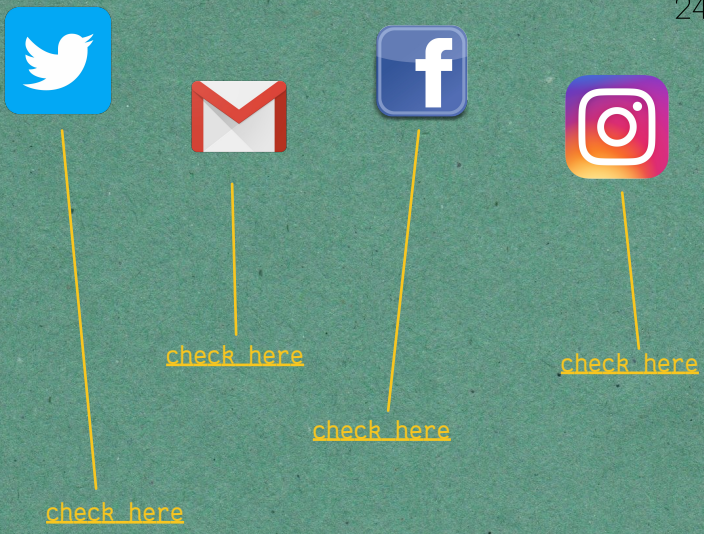
9. Riseup VPN

Riseup is a technical collective from Seattle, US, that provides open-source secure communication services like encrypted email and mailing lists. They also provide a secure VPN called Bitmask.



Privacy settings management

Always check if an app or website has privacy settings, and if they have, check what the default permission settings are and change them to suit your needs.



Two-factor authentication

Check if you enabled two-factor authentication on your social media accounts and email. Remember the backup codes, or you will be locked out of your account if you lose your smartphone.

Talking privacy with Kim Reynolds and Mamoqenelo Morolong

Kim M. Reynolds is Cape Town-based writer, UCT Master's graduate and member of Our Data Bodies (ODB), a collective that works at the intersection of marginalisation and big data surveillance in the USA. She joined ODB in 2018 as a researcher through her Technology and Justice professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and came to hear about a feminist internet through ODB's participation in the Internet Freedom Festival in Spain in April 2018.

"I came into data security work two or three years ago, thanks to some classes I took and experiences I had," Kim explained.

"The Edward Snowden leaks was one of the bigger things that happened during Obama's presidency and I was interested in how race is frequently left out of such critical conversations, such as how the internet can be a tool that's reproducing oppression. I made a lot of historical connections between surveillance and big data, like the United States' practice of sabotage of Black people by weaponizing concepts such as 'Black identity extremism' which is an FBI- and CIA-created category of surveillance methods used to terrorise the Black Panthers. And it's not just in the US – surveillance wasn't just being used domestically, but was used to aid the apartheid regime in capturing Nelson Mandela"

Part of the work that APC does is critiquing protectionist kinds of measures, which resonates with ODB's politics. Even now, Kim has observed continuities in methods of surveillance and breaches in privacy between the US and South Africa.

"I think SA is one of the biggest markets for personal security," she explains. "Shoshana Zuboff's book, Surveillance Capitalism, talks about how things like private security and your home cameras and smart fridges and nanny cams

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and digital doorbells that send images to your phones — all these things are sold under the guise of making you more safe, but cameras don't really do that. ODB has the same ethos as the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, which is building power not paranoia."

She continues: "Increased surveillance encourages suspicion and takes away from community power because we're so divided and paranoid; it breaks up community trust and makes it harder and harder to resist anything, or even to understand what we're experiencing as people because sometimes we don't see how oppressive some things are. After Uyinene's murder, many people started calling for more police on UCT's campus, more security checking the campus buses, more security at the dorms... but abusers already have student cards, and checking rapists' cards doesn't make them not-rapists, doesn't make us any safer. We know, but at the same time we often forget, that policing structures are oppressive, and that more police does not mean increased safety, especially because cops are also catcalling us, abusing us and groping us at protests."

"We know, but at the same time we often forget, that policing structures are oppressive, and that more police does not mean increased safety"

Part of her concerns on digital safety and online surveillance have to do with how sexual and gender expression is mitigated and marginalized. "Audre Lorde talked about the essentialisation of sexuality, and that there is always a pull between the political and the spiritual, and yet we have a super reductionist idea of sex and sexuality because we mostly see sexual expression only being reserved for porn, and so much porn emphasizes sensation without feeling. I am also increasingly concerned by Instagram's shadow-banning practices. For instance, there is an art collective in London called Pxssy Palace, ran mostly by non-binary people of colour, that often throws parties, and they've been experiencing a lot of shadow banning, such that they receive much less engagement, and at

some point, people weren't sure if they were still throwing parties. There's also a US-based membership-driven publication called Salty that carried out feminist research recently by asking all their subscribers to answer a survey about whether they have been banned or whether they have had posts taken down. The important points it's making is that the AI Instagram is using is misogynistic, racist and ableist. So while I appreciate the internet for being a space that cultivates knowledge, affirmation and community for us as people of marginalized identities, I simultaneously worry about how we get shut down so that we really cannot find each other."

Mamoqenelo Morolong is a Master's student who works on digital safety, although her focus is on children and teenagers. She studies Computer Science at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and is a member of the Digital Forensics and Information Security Research cluster. She has been involved with youth development in Lesotho, her home country, since 2015.

"Back then, I realised that early pregnancy, heading the family/ taking care of young siblings while parents are at work mostly in SA, and the lack of sanitary pads and food were some of the main reasons girls were dropping out of the high school I was working at," Mamo says about the foundation of her social justice work. Some of the students approached her with their challenges, so she started a self-awareness program with them in order to motivate them, and develop a platform to share their personal stories, which happened to motivate others.

Passionate about working with young people and motivated by her experiences, she became involved with Child Online Protection research at NUST when she moved to Namibia.

"From their research data, I realised that so many young people are victims of online sexual exploitation, cyber bullying and harassment," Mamo said. She started working on a project called 'Developing A Clean Digital Footprint for a Positive Online Reputation', which aims to share knowledge, information and skills on child online safety.

"As a member of Internet Society Namibia, I saw a thread on the call for applications and felt like it is in line with what I do, and I wanted to learn more about feminism, so I applied. As part of the project, we have developed the small flyer, which contains the dos and don'ts for our specific context, and we shared it with the public during the 2019 Safety and Security Expo as well as with high scholars during the 2019 NUST career fair."

Earlier research illustrated that Namibian children on social media were vulnerable to cyber grooming, which often resulted in sexual violence, and most young internet users are active, mainly through online video games and social media. "There have been cases in which children have committed suicide through the influence of violent online gaming communities, hence the need for online safety awareness and education," Mamo said.

Mamo has also done work on data leakages and Android devices in the workplace under the auspices of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) company policies.

"I think it is every employee's responsibility to understand the information security governance of the company they work for, as well as knowing their expected compliances, and what legal action could be taken in case of non-compliance. Every employee who accesses the company network with their personal smartphones should make sure they are familiar with the ICT governance policies."

She explains that in many cases, companies enroll their employees in technologies such as Mobile Device Management, which grants the employer access to employees' smartphones.

"This means that when the employer goes through their networking monitoring systems and notice an anomaly from a given device, they can wipe it clean," she added. Employees are thus under the company's surveillance and if they are not aware of the laws that protect their digital rights, they may find themselves on the wrong side of the law. "Workers of the 21st century should know exactly what their digital rights are and how they should protect their online personas."

Short bit: Gl!tch

Glitch is a charity dedicated to ending online abuse such as trolling and doxing, and seeks to improve digital citizenship. Their work spans putting together toolkits about online abuse to advocacy to digital resilience workshops – all activities working under their values of awareness, advocacy and action.

Seyi Akiwowo, founder of Glitch, had first-hand experience with online trolling after a speech she gave went viral. Seyi wondered what could be done to root out threats to online bodies, and how the internet can be made into a safer place for marginalised identities and vulnerable communities. From there, Glitch was born.

The Digital Self-Care workshops Glitch runs seek to understand and explore what emotional, mental and physical well-being looks like online.

Here's a quick five point self-care ground exercise, workshopped by Glitch:

- ♥ What are you willing to share online?
- ♥ How much time do you spend online?
- ♥ Do you reflect on what you post?
- ♥ Do you have offline support?
- ♥ Do you have boundaries in your space?

Twitter: @GlitchUK_

HerInternet is a Ugandan women-run organisation that supports digital literacy and digital security for queer women, gender non-binary people and sex workers, as well as combating online violence.

HerInternet's work is closely linked to the Feminist Principles of the Internet because, while not many organisational members come from a tech training background, they are all passionate about and deeply invested in advocacy through the human rights in the digital era.

"At the core of our work is feminism," says Sandra, a digital security trainer. "We realise feminism is the way to change the world, in tech, in human rights work, in education, in economic labour."

As such, HerInternet often hosts open space talks, where they use social media to invite participation, ask who wants to talk about digital safety, and then publicise the event.

Any member of the public can walk into the event, sit down, and HerInternet members try to answer people's questions. Someone might want to know, "What do I do if my boyfriend knows my password?"

No question or concern is too obscure or 'small' for HerInternet, and the organisation tries to guide people into more responsible thinking when it comes to digital safety.

Coming to the MFI Africa

conference, Sandra believes, has helped re-frame resistance to oppressive state forces, and re-think strategies for combating invasion of privacy and online violence against queer bodies.

"It's not all about HerInternet working alone; it's all got to be a collective effort, because someone else somewhere else might have different insights on how to go about our issues and interventions that we might not have seen or thought about before," she concluded.

Twitter: @HerInternet

Feminist storytellers

After the conversations we had at MFI: Africa, Jennifer Radloff, a member of APC's WRP, gave some historical context of APC's work on literally building its own platforms to share stories. Jen first worked with APC in 1997, when she was at the Africa Gender Institute.

"In the late 90s, there was a strong emphasis on including African people and networks, like FEMNET, ENDA Synfev and WomensNet," says Jen but it was immediately evident that white women were a lot more confident around the technology. Part of the collective's work was prioritising Black women and girls in the tech space, and de-centering South Africa's relative privilege in digital and communication infrastructure. The 1995 Beijing conference and the Commission for the Status of Women in New York were also important catalysts for

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amplification, and Flamme–African Sisters Online was the main African link to Beijing '95.

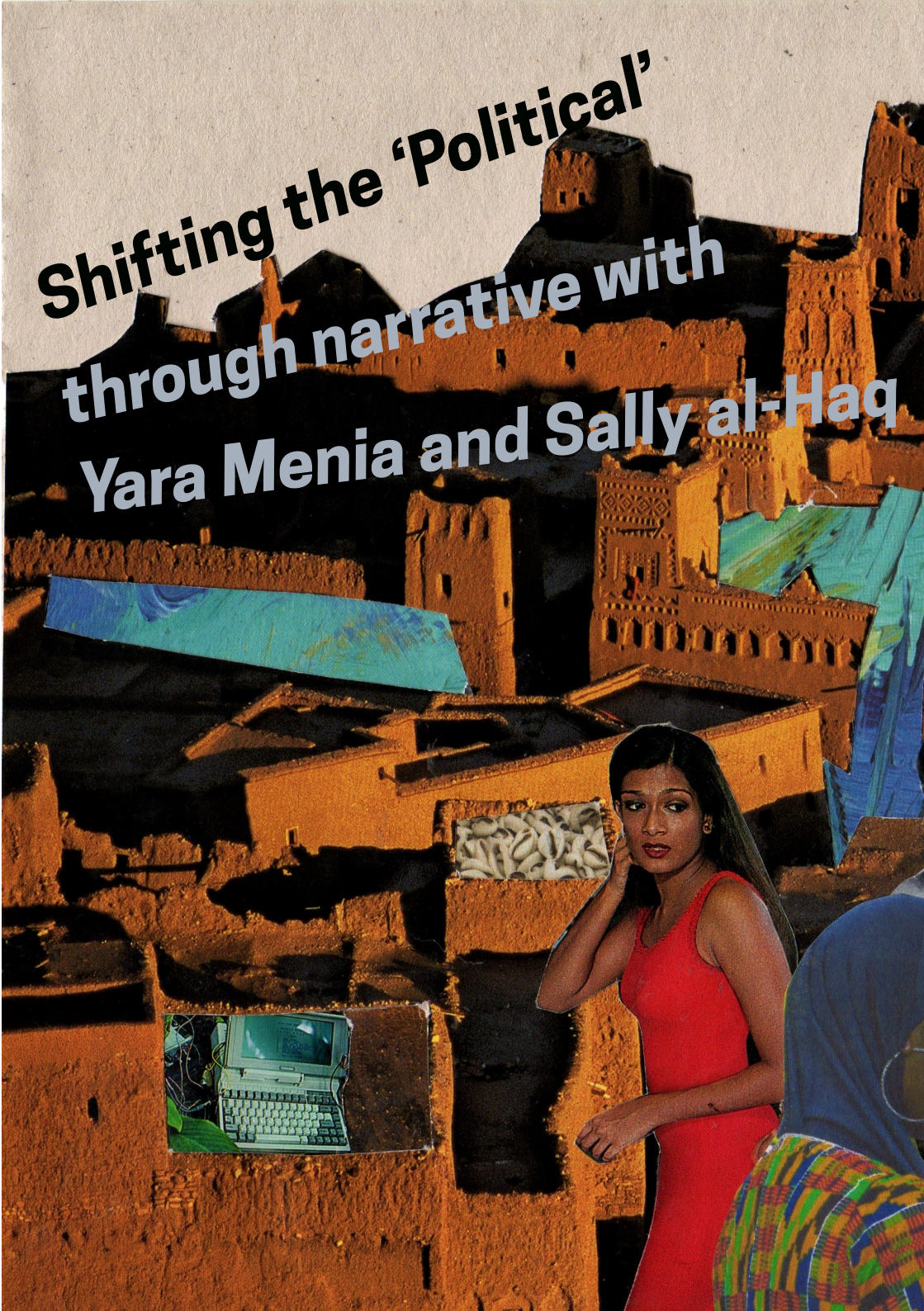
Jen also commented on the intergenerational continuum of digital knowledge that she witnesses today. "I've been steeped in internet technologies for years, but now I feel so behind, and younger people know so much more. Technology would be a great entry point into intergenerational dialogue."

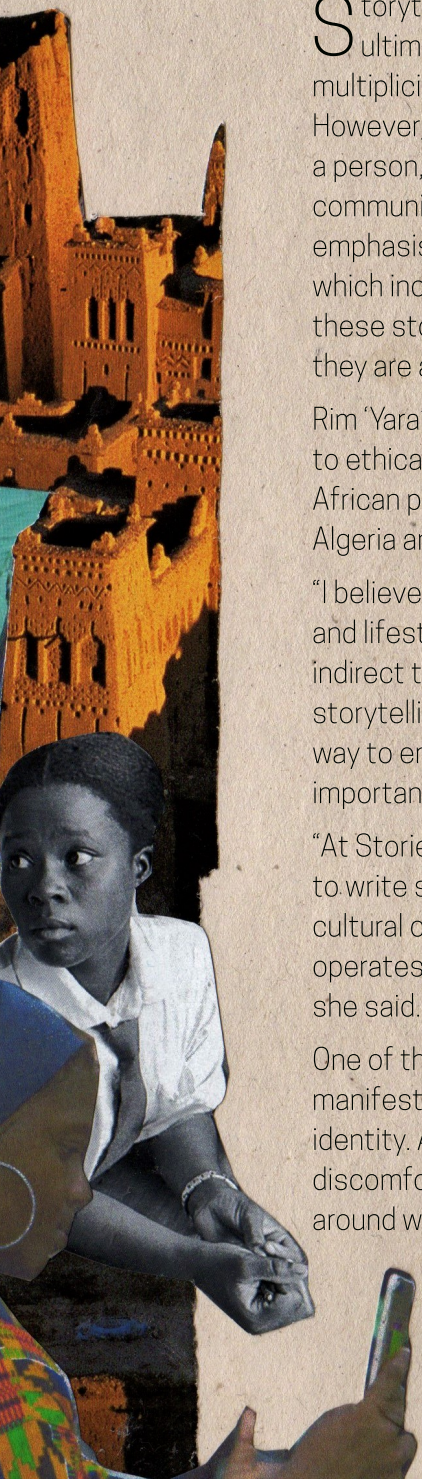
Intergenerational dialogue comes from listening to each other and engaging in active and radical memory-work, so that older feminists can share stories about their years of experience, and then learning about the different conditions of labour and organising that younger feminists have to contend with.

"One way we dealt with these different iterations of gatekeeping was the development of digital stories. Women then become more comfortable in using technology, telling their stories and creating content in their preferred languages," Jen recalls. "There was a lot of work put into thinking about equalising methodologies, and storytelling is something very precious to us at APC". In 2007, Digital Storytelling officially came online.

At MFI: Africa, we talked extensively about how important it is that digital technologies be a tool with which women and gender diverse people can share their own stories in their own forms of expression. Stories can be important vehicles to transfer ideas and feelings to our chosen audiences. and to amplify struggles, victories and all the complex iterations of our experiences in between. We found our love for story-telling and stories mirrored in Yara and Sally, two MFI: Africa participants from North Africa.

Shifting the 'Political' through narrative with Yara Menia and Sally al-Haq





Storytelling as a feminist methodology is a complicated but ultimately useful tool that allows for expression of the multiplicity of contexts, identities, political ethos and more. However, there are ways in which telling stories can endanger a person, especially someone from a vulnerable or persecuted community or demographic. It is therefore important to emphasise that the feminist work is to share stories safely, which includes but is not limited to thinking about who tells these stories, how they are told and retold, and making sure they are always shared consensually.

Rim 'Yara' Menia, a multi-hyphenate feminist free radical, works to ethically and creatively share these stories from a North African perspective through organisations like Stories from Algeria and Afrika Youth Movement.

"I believe that storytelling is anchored in the African mindset and lifestyle," Yara says. "It has always been a direct and indirect tool to preserve culture and traditions. It's through storytelling that truth and inspiration shout out loud; it is a way to empower popular will and aspiration and most importantly, marginalised perspectives."

"At Stories from Algeria, we organise workshops to train youth to write stories about Algeria and its culture, with a focus on cultural crisis. We aim to change narratives on how culture operates and identity functions in Algeria and North Afrika," she said.

One of the ways in which this crisis of culture and identity manifests is in the complexities of what constitutes an Africa identity. At the MFI: Africa convening, Yara brought up some discomforts about the use of 'Black women' as an identity around which many feminists organise in Africa. She raised issues of naming, Blackness and what an African identity which is inclusive of regional and phenotypical differences looks like.

"This may not be the correct way to say it, but I would qualify myself as a non-black African – and this brings a lot of questions and problematics with it," Yara explained.

"This conference is in sub-Saharan Africa where the majority of people are dark-skinned, and I am considered European or someone who is re-appropriating the culture. But when I'm in my country or go to other parts of the world, I am considered as North African and ironically Arab, or anything non-representative of my identity. It is so confusing because you think that you don't belong, and I believe we need to change the narrative around this."

Recently, Yara has joined the Power Team of Afrika Youth Movement, which is a youth-led Pan-African organisation for Africans on the continent and in the diaspora.

"Even though we have not used storytelling directly, the movement, which was started by Aya Chebbi in 2012, has always been about storytelling and changing the narrative. Two years ago, we launched a campaign called #TrueAfrika. For the project we collected stories from all around and shared them on our social media pages to show a "close-to-true" image of Afrika and its youth."

Changing social norms, debunking stereotypes and creating knowledge about Africa, for Africans are some of Yara's passions, and is something that Sally Al-Haq, from Egypt, shares.

"We use Arabic because English is not our language — it is a privilege to read in English, and it makes some of the greatest feminist literature inaccessible for many"

Sally has been a part of the Ikhtyar Feminist Collective, which started in 2013, with an urge and a passion to produce feminist content in Arabic 'about us and for us', she said.

"We use Arabic because English is not our language — it is a privilege to read in English, and it makes some of the greatest feminist literature inaccessible for many, and we wanted to translate our influences in our mother-tongue

and to write in our own language," Sally added. "We don't do storytelling, more of theoretical personal narratives, where the personal is coming from our stories but not just for the sake of telling it, rather engaging it with our political."

Ikhtyar means 'choice' in English, and as a collective that prioritises queer consciousness, advocates for sexual freedoms and more, its members face restrictions in how they tell stories, and disseminate knowledge online. "Surveillance on the internet, and blocking websites in Egypt are some restrictions we face," said Sally.

The collective hosts cinema nights, seminars on gender and sexuality and publish an Arabic publication online. Their past editions explore feminist internet building, what different forms of localised community and self-care look like, and a publication complementing their previous work about gender and reproductive health rights. These works are free to download and access on their website. They also put together a podcast which weaves digital security with sexual and reproductive health and rights education.

In the face of state repression, there are other modes of making and sharing feminist knowledge. Translating stories to the digital realm, and using the internet and tech in ways to enhance knowledge sharing, are key points to Yara and Sally's work, and also demonstrate how the feminist adage, first used by Carol Hanisch – "the personal is the political" – can be filled out to take on new, context-specific meanings in Africa.

ZINE-ING A FEM

Zine-making has a long history as a tool of feminist self-publishing – from the Riot world. Learning how to make our own archive of knowledge is an empowering skill, level of access. In our own lives, zines have been a life-line. With Ja. Magazine, for making shit because we want to, documenting specific cultural moments in South publications didn't. Zines have brought us closer to our crushes, solidified friendships

At MFI Africa, we spent an evening making zines, doing free-writing exercises [see from an intense day of sharing, talking and listening – and uncoiled as we cut and

The loose brief for the workshop was to make a six-page zine for whoever, or whatever – some people made zines for their lovers, others as intimate liner notes for where their head was at.

Here are in-progress and finished A4 6-page zines:

MINIST INTERNET

Grrrrl movement to more contemporary and inclusive zine cultures around the and the DIY nature of zine-making lends itself to organic creation and a wide example, zine-making has led to a wide network of creatively-minded people Africa's post-apartheid, apartheid journey, and giving space to stories other and forced us to emote when we can't afford therapy.

Erika's Faceboob's prose piece] and collaging. We exhaled a collective breath folded paper, coloured in and drew.

FACEBOOBS:

HAVE NIPPLES BUT NOT FACEBOOK. DID YOU KNOW I HAVE THE WEIRDEST BOOBS AND IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR A BOOK MY PARENTS HAD ABOUT THE WAY OUR BODIES CHANGE I WOULD'VE BEEN SO FREAKED OUT ABOUT MY LONG, HANGY BOOBS. ALL NIPPLES – TO CENSOR THESE IN FACEBOOK MORE THAN AN EMOJI. BUT CAN INVERTED NIPPLES BE FREE? NO TALKING ABOUT NIPPLES AND VUVLA'S IN FREEBOOK SO IF I WANT BOOBS IN MY FACE I'LL GO TO ANOTHER PLACE – NOW CLEAVAGE THAT'S A DIFFERENT THING. FACEBOOK LIKES ALL KINDS OF CRACKS – BOOBS AND BUTTS AND CRACKING YOUR LIFE OPEN FOR ALL TO SEE.

– ERIKA

Making a Feminist Party

THE PLAYLIST

- ♥ Iwotshi – Buhlebendalo
- ♥ John Cena – Sho Madjozi
- ♥ Back That Azz Up – Juvenile
- ♥ Accelerator (Serereka) – Kansoul and Vivian
- ♥ Wire Wire – Bebe Cool
- ♥ Sweet Sensation – Sheebah ft. Orezi
- ♥ Zaama Zaama – Takfarinas
- ♥ Ballago – Thione Seck
- ♥ If – Kaytranada
- ♥ Vulindlela – Brenda Fassie
- ♥ Qongqothwane (The Click Song) – Miriam Makeba
- ♥ Ti Chuong – Emmanuel Jal & Nyaruach
- ♥ Slide On Me – Frank Ocean
- ♥ AnaTaban – AnaTaban
- ♥ Chickibombe – Levixone
- ♥ Johnny – Yemi Alade
- ♥ Coming in Hot – Lecrae and Andy Mineo
- ♥ Dena Nesh Endet Neh – Abyssiniya Vine
- ♥ Hard Time – Seinabo Sey
- ♥ Love Drunk – Ami Faku

Language and access in a digital age

Sheena Magenya is the APC Project Coordinator for All Women Count – Take Back the Tech (TBTT). We spoke to her about the gathering and the latest TBTT campaign birthed from conversations at MFI: Africa.

During the last 16 Days of Activism, All Women Count hosted a tech-play exercise through #FeministForwards. The idea came from conversations at MFI Africa about how African women and queer people online are innovative with the 'weapons' being used against them in the form of memes and other commonly circulated media created to injure and attack.

"We wanted to turn them around to shift discourse, make a forward [chain message] that is popular, and shares a completely different perspective — twisting it into a strong, sensible, cool feminist message to share and spread."

As Sheena says: "We were reasserting presence — this is still our space, bringing play back into our interaction with technology away from the idea that the most we can do as feminists online is raise our voice about injustice. Sometimes I want to post nudes, dammit, I want to play online and feel safe doing it. That's always been TBTT's underpinning force – tech serves our purposes, not the other way around."

On MFI: Africa, Sheena raised how the gathering allowed people from different places to learn about each other's homes and contexts.

"One of my biggest takeaways is that we still don't know enough about each other. Being in close contact with each other helped us step out of the comfort zones of our politics and unlearn our assumptions about each other's homes and contexts."

"The online-offline divide is a

continued next page

lie, and we need one just as much as we need the other. Technology doesn't yet let us have comprehensive and non-exhaustive conversations, and a lot of it is by design. Twitter's character limit makes you truncate your thoughts and distil your politics into the most passionate or angry or vitriolic content… we're out here taking shots. Nobody's having four cocktails with ice and water and juice that slow down your high. We don't have time, and we can't afford it."

Meeting in person also highlighted the issue of language and meaningful inclusion. Although the FPI's are available in several languages,there is still a lot of work to be done on the inclusion of labour in different languages from across the continent. Everybody at the convening had to understand and adequately communicate in English, which is how we learned so much about each other's work, but selective multilingualism shouldn't have to be a basic requirement for inclusion.

"Something that we take for granted is that a lot of Francophone activists are doing this work anyway. The problem of being a minority really is a question of power — the tight budgets, the minority of numbers — and we end up speaking past each other so often," says Sheena.

Eva Yedidja, a network specialist from Cote d'Ivoire, shared her sentiments about being in a primarily Anglophone space. Eva is communications officer for Femmes et TIC, an organisation that trains women and girls on the proper use of the internet and other computer tools. She is also president of the Ivorian chapter of the

Youth Internet Governance Forum and a moderator for youth online training classes at Internet Society Africa. Through her work she learned about MFI: Africa, and was one of the few Francophone attendees.

On the issue of language and accessibility, she said that the language barrier is a huge reason for the disconnect between Anglophone and Francophone movements.

"Many convenings don't take translation into account — excluding people who don't understand English. School learning gives us basic English knowledge but the skills acquired aren't sufficient to integrate into a English-speaking environment."

Eva says that reinforcement courses in English typically cost at least $100, an amount that not everyone can afford.

"The more arrangements that aren't made to include all communities, the greater the divide. In a society that wants to be just, the same rights and opportunities must be offered to everyone, regardless of the language spoken. Even when a person has the required skills, they are denied an opportunity just because they don't speak English."

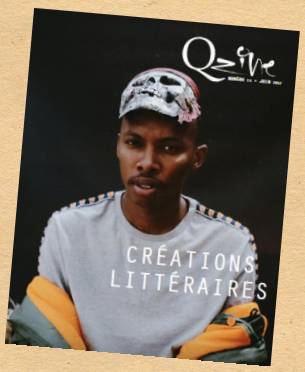
"Even when a person has the required skills, they are denied an opportunity just because they don't speak English"

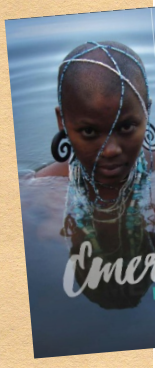
The Francophone/Anglophone divide runs deeper in organising, notes Eva, and she believes the key to more involvement from Africans in Francophone regions depends on linguistic diversity.

"Many initiatives are born, but due to a lack of follow-up and supervision, they die. This is not surprising when we note that most training and coaching is still in English. This favouritism is the reason for the disinterest of the Francophone community in Anglophone activities."

Short
Queer A
You
Netw

Queer African Youth Network (QAYN) is a queer and feminist organisation founded in 2010 and led by lesbians, queer and trans* women as well as gender non-conforming activists. The organisation has been building a constellation of actors to promote the well-being and safety of LGBTQ+ people in West Africa and in Cameroon through projects such as the Activist School, an incubator programme that connects activists from Francophone West African countries and Cameroon to amplify collective issues, share strategies, refine





t bit: African th work

analysis and queer movement building.

QAYN collaborates with several groups and organisations in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, etc. In tandem with these organisations, QAYN participated in a study report called We Exist: Mapping LGBTQ Organizing in West Africa, and in 2015, published findings of their own in the report Do Not Wake Up a Sleeping Lion: Mapping the legal environment of LGBTQ persons in Francophone West Africa.

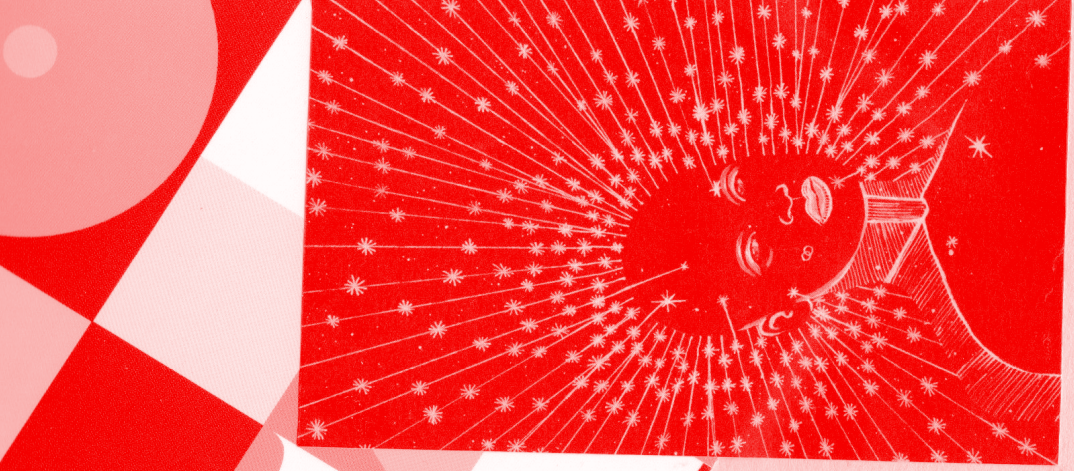
Claire, an activist from QAYN, reflected on her time at the MFI convening, noting how important language is in any feminist discussions on the continent.

"The region where we work is majority Francophone so there was also a lot of conversations around how come French-speaking Africans are not always included in these feminist spaces [...] How can we work as Africans to be more inclusive of the languages spoken on the continent and advance the feminist movement in general?" she questioned.

Q-zine is a Pan-African and bilingual (French and English) zine that publishes stories for and by queer people and allies across the continent.

QAYN believes that cultural activism can be found in many forms, and actively produces this repository of creative writing, profiles, illustrations, poems and more to promote cross-regional solidarity and celebrate the wealth of Afro-queer cultural production. The first edition was put out eight years ago, and there are now thirteen editions to feast your eyes on.

Twitter: @qayncenter



On the M Word (October 29, 2019)

BY CAROLINE

Quiet.

Quiet.

Storm brewing, sky darkening, air is heavy, go inside. Stay inside. Close your windows.

I heard they are trying to quell, trying to squash

Squash the sounds of

Stomping. Running. Jumping. Walking with a cane. Cycling. Sliding. Jump-roping. Speedwalking. Chair-wheeling. Skipping.

Movement

Too fast / too slow / too much / too loud / too quiet

TOO… Too… too…

Too much change / too much new / too much XX chromosome / too much resistance / too much "what are you?" / too much "hmmm" / too much "I can't quite tell" / too much wet / too much glitter / too much color / too much NO / too much OH / too much ooooooohhhhhh

Feels like. Sounds like.

Running. Skipping. Flying. Swimming. Diving. Dancing. Twerking. Stilt-walking. Catapulting.

Tip-toeing. Twirling. Kayaking. Racing.

At first – it's far, at first – it's quiet, at first it's footprints, at first it's echoes, at first it's whispers, at first it's messages written quickly, at first it's long skype calls that never seem to end, at first it's loud bursts of laughter in a crowded cinema. At first – it's practice.

And then bursts and spurts AND squirts, and

ARMOR. There's armor. We've got armor. Glorious armor.

Umbrellas. Fast bikes. Dykes on bikes. Scarves. Data – lots of data, plenty, plenty data. Wit. Quick fingers. Effective fingers. Codes. Disruption. Claiming my time. Reclaiming my time. First aid kits. Extra bags in your bag, au cas où (just in case). An extra pagne (wrapper/lappa), au cas où (just in case). Unlimited data on your phone. Running shoes. Waterproof suitcases. And, plastic bags to

cover / your / hair /

when it's raining outside.

Call your cousins. Tweet your people. Tell them

It's on.

Short bit: The Initiative for Equality and Non-Discrimination

The Initiative for Equality and Non-Discrimination (INEND) is a non-profit organisation that carries out research, advocacy, capacity and network building towards equality, acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in Kenya's coastal region. It was founded by Esther "Essy" Adhiambo in 2015, while at the Human Rights Advocacy Program at Columbia University. It has since grown into five board members and five members.

Because of the work that INEND does, it faces a lot of online violence, and uses the FPIs and the Thirteen Manifestations of Online GBV to support their online work. These online tools help them educate the public on violence towards lesbians, bisexual and trans* women, who encounter verbal abuse and intimate partner violence online. They also work to inform partners, friends and families how to protect themselves online, and advise them on what to do in instances when they encounter violence.

"This experience has been overwhelming — every time I come into a feminist space, I learn something new," Essy said about the MFI Africa convening. "We're planning to have a TweetChat on feminism and online safety, and during one of the presentation sessions, I managed to ask some of the feminists here to be panellists and moderators from East Africa. That was one of my objectives achieved, without even having left the space. We also talked about translating the FPIs into Swahili, so that is work that we will have to do soon."

INEND makes active use of webinars and TweetChats to encourage engagement with LBQ audiences, especially social media users who might not have the visibility and social capital of the

blue Twitter validation checkmark. In November 2019, they hosted a webinar on Digital Content Curation and a TweetChat on #DatingInADigitalAge, and in December 2019, they hosted a chat on online GBV towards LBQ women in Kenya.

Twitter: @INENDorg Instagram: inend.ke

As we're putting this zine together, a novel strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) has thrown millions of people into a panic. Governments are imposing travel bans, government, media and personal accounts are all over the place and schools, offices and other sites of mass gathering around the world are closing, emphasising the precariousness of so many of our lives within health, educational, labour, housing and food systems not designed to protect us.

Labour conditions in the gig economy, much of which is online, were a major talking point at the convening. Most of us work or have worked as freelancers/ free radicals, and have varying experiences of job in/security. All of us have experienced the difficulties of trying to organise with little to no financial support. And when Jean came to MFI: Africa sessions armed with a deep curiosity about the economic ecosystem of feminist organising, job precarity and the gig economy, we took note and learnt through her provocations.

Wellness and feminist philanthropy with Jean Kemitare

As part of the ecosystem of women's human rights defenders, activists, free radicals and more, donor organisations and feminist philanthropic funders play a pivotal role in distributing resources to groups and individuals with organising and mobilising capacity on the ground. Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF – Africa) is one such organisation.

"All feminists on the African continent can and should collaborate with UAF – Africa," says Jean Kemitare, a Ugandan feminist, researcher, human rights activist and current programmes director at UAF - Africa. "We are a pan-African women's rights fund that provides financial and technical support to women's rights organisations and activists. Our niche programme and mandate is rapid response grant giving."

To this end, UAF - Africa provides small grants up to a maximum of $12 000 within the shortest turnaround time possible — the fastest the donor organisation has provided a grant has been in an astounding 5 hours. For UAF-Africa, the ideal time for feminist organisations and women's human right's defenders to make interventions is between one to three months, and these are responses to anurgent need, where actions happen quickly.

"The rationale behind this is to breakdown the bureaucratic, technological, linguistically and geographical barriers that

inhibit activists and organisations from accessing the financial resources necessary to respond to unanticipated opportunities and situations that affect women's human rights in Africa," explained Jean.

Currently, her role as Programmes Director broadly involves strategic leadership, and support to program quality, which is an alignment of day-to-day work with our broad strategic goals, mission and vision. On a daily basis, she oversees and facilitates comprehensive team support, and external communications.

"These seemingly micro-activities are part of a system that then allows us to periodically breathe and unpack what we are learning internally and externally, and put learning to action in relation to the strategy," added Jean.

Jean comes from a decade of work in gender-based violence (GBV) organising, having led the GBV Prevention Network at Raising Voices, and understands how disproportionate and uneven access to resources are a huge challenge to grassroots organisations.

"I have mainly focused on developing cutting-edge prevention approaches and tools for tackling gender inequality and violence against women and girls (VAWG). Prior to that, I was engaged in chronic poverty research and policy advocacy where these efforts contributed to the development of a Social Protection Policy in Uganda. My dream is to see a world where women in all their diversity are valued and can access opportunity and resources in equitably."

"Participating in the Feminist Tech Exchange of 2008 birthed a range of skills and actions within

me that led to platforms like @GBVNet and an article on using social media for feminist activism called Hashtag activism: popularizing feminist analysis of violence against women in the Horn, East and Southern Africa, co-written by myself, Maureen Kangere and Lori Michau," she explained.

Jean's on-going journey into feminist activism, and occupying different places in the ecosystem of social justice and societal reform, has been a personal one – and one many of us can relate to.

"The personal is political – and in many cases what fuels us as feminist activists is our analysis of personal experiences or of those close to us. The righteous anger we feel fuels us to engage in activism at an individual and collective level. This is what my journey has been – personal experiences coupled with those around me raised my consciousness about patriarchy and the oppression and pain resulting from it," she said.

To date, the project that has given her the most joy, and re-invigorated her dedication to dismantling patriarchy in all its forms is organising the African Women Human Right's Defender's Platform, otherwise known as the Feminist Republik.

"This is a space where African women human rights defenders will relieve themselves of the wear and tear, rusting and erosion of soul, heart, mind and body that come with activism; support each other and rejuvenate. The work of the Feminist Republik is based on three thematic areas of work - holistic security, safety, wellbeing and collective care, healing justice and documentation and knowledge generation."

Jean says the platform will generate knowledge through research on indigenous African ways through which women generally, and women human rights defender's specifically, have practised collective care, unpack historical and generational traumas we suffer from, and how we move through and resolve conflict.

Feminist Republik builds on the work from other feminist philanthropic associations and funders such as Frida's work and care models, and Happiness Manifestx. Anti-capitalist and decolonial self and community care, and ensuring that burn-out, exhaustion and chauvinistic/patriarchal ways of understanding work don't become part of an organisation's ethos are important to an organisation' sustainability and most importantly, to the people who work there.

APC WRP are a group of very cool feminists who care deeply about how to make the internet a safe, more equitable place for all people – especially for queer people and women.

APC resources

So, next time you're:

♥ *endlessly scrolling through Instagram at your favourite coffee-shop, seeing another nipple censored and wondering if there's a way to make the internet more inclusive and feminist,*

♥ *at work sexting your bbz, wondering if your boss can see how you're using work wifi, and whether there's a more private tech alternative to Whatsapp*

♥ *planning a protest, march, sit-in or putting together an online queer (solidarity) group, wondering how to organise safer,*

♥ *on your laptop or tablet wondering how to secure your data better,*

♥ *or just feeling lonely on the internet (it's like that sometimes…)*

check out these resources ↓→

GenderIT

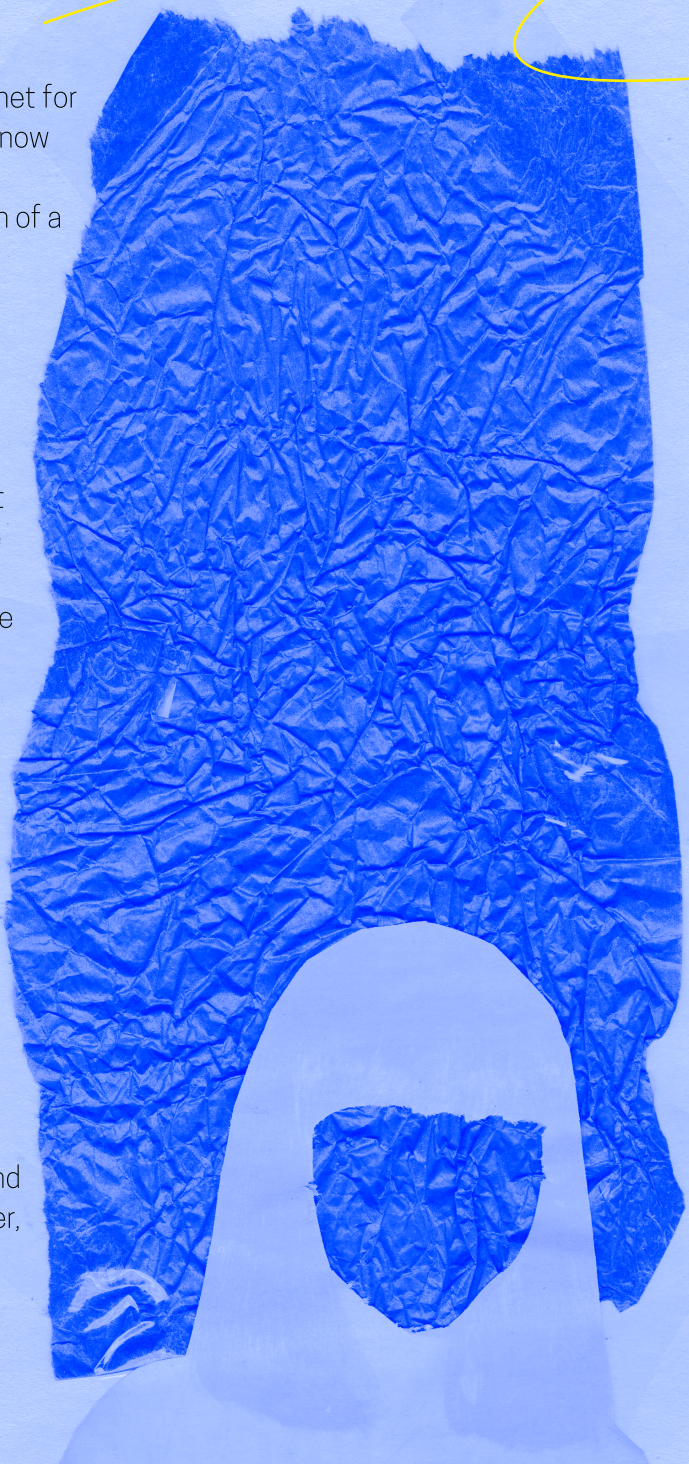
GenderIT offers feminist reflections on internet policies around the world, and their broad scope means there's something to pique your interest. From a feminist analysis of the Hong Kong protests, to internet rights to female porn, GenderIT has covered the issues with rigour and delicacy. The website is always looking for new writers and journalists – and they pay well! The articles on GenderIT can be read in English and Spanish, so get to submitting your work.

Feminist Internet Research Network

If you engage in feminist research about the internet in the global south, like we do, then you know that opportunities to explore boundaries of departments within the academy are few and far between. With eight partners across the global south, FIRN jumps into this intersection by plugging researchers in to nodes of support – financial, intellectual and social – that we need. FIRN uses the platform of APC's study mapping research in gender and digital tech and the Feminist Principles of the Internet to launch into questions and provide data driven evidence about access (usage and infrastructure), big data and its influence on vulnerable populations, online gender-based violence and gendered labour in digital economies.

Take back the tech

If you've been on the internet for any number of years, you know that being trans*, queer, woman, or any combination of a vulnerable group of people (such as sex-workers and disabled folks) means an increased chance of violence to your digital person. TBTT is a four-year project that seeks not just to dismantle the structure of violence online by strengthening voices in the global south through connecting each other to regional struggles, but also to reclaim our space and our power in creative ways. Through building a network of local partners, facilitating tech safety bootcamps, and using GenderIT to spread information about online gender-based violence, the project aims to instigate conversations and policy change about gender, sexuality and more.



Digital Stories

Storytelling as a feminist methodology is as diverse as being a child in the kitchen and hearing stories about family members from your grandmother, or the catharsis from telling someone 'me, too'. "All our stories are true and they are ours", the website explains, and the project provides a platform for people to share stories about disability, sexual and sex-work rights, and violence against women. The platform hosts written and video work, as well as resources on how to share content safely, how to protect anonymity and some writing facilitation tools for your own feminist storytelling workshop. You can add to the digital archive of stories of survivorship, and more, on the website.

EROTICS

EROTICS is an exploration of the intersections between sex, sexuality and the internet which started in 2008, and has carried out research in ten countries so far. This research started as a seed and has expanded into a network encompassing Lebanon, South Africa, Brazil, India and more. On the one hand, there is the empowering curve of the work that we try to do as activist groups or individuals,but on the other hand, there is the backlash. Even as we encounter violence, censorship and unequitable access,the internet should be a space to explore our freedoms, particularly freedom of expression, in whatever languages and forms we find most comfortable. But it is very tough to bring this up in governance spaces because the language doesn't quite exist yet, and so in the vacuum between policy and legislature, EROTICS claims space. If you are interested in how women in Mumbai express and negotioate their online identities and exploration of sexuality and gender, or the gaps in lived reality and the Constitution in South African transgender people and lesbians use of the internet, then have a look through the research – free to use and download online.

Gmail

closing notes

On Tue, Mar 17, 2020 at 12:17 PM Youlendree Appasamy <[redacted]> wrote:

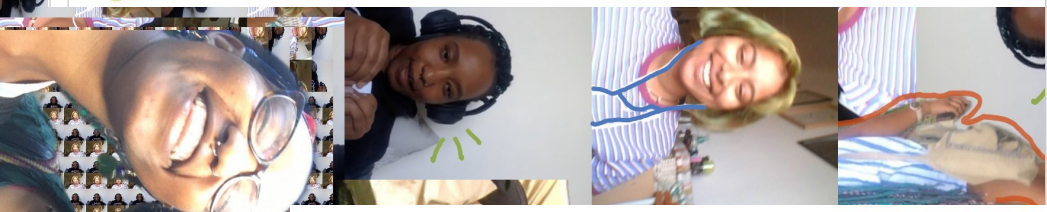
Hey bbz,

I *cannot* believe we're here at the finish line for the ***MFI: Africa*** zine. It's been a journey, shem.

I keep on thinking about our first meeting with Jan at the cafe, and how we felt so honoured and grateful at the opportunity presented to us (and also abit like maybe it's a scam because we're not use to being paid adequately as freelancers!). Idek but the trust factor was so unusual to me. Having been infantilised and undermined at workplaces and with clients before, to be trusted as an expert -- as someone whose work and mind and spirit matters -- was just so beautifully unexpected. How did you sus out the situation? And how are you feeling about life, the zine? we need to throw a party when covid-19 has finished with us.

Anywhoo, in these interesting times 😁🙃😤 it's reassuring that basic human connection isn't dead. And that we, in our small small ways, have documented it!

Yours in social distancing,
len🐍



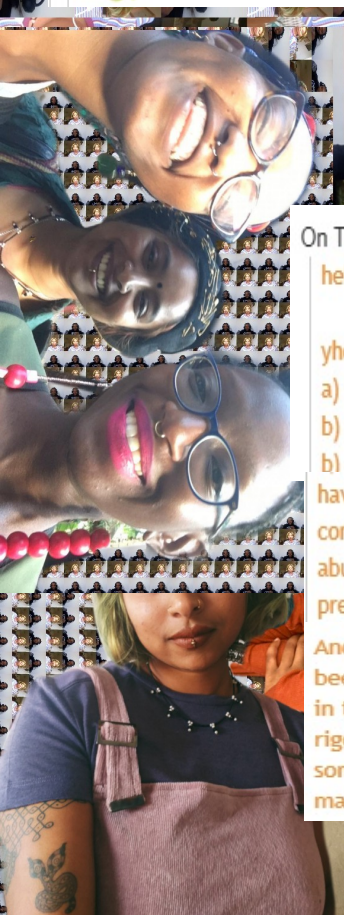
On Thu, Mar 19, 2020 at 6:13 AM Youlendree Appasamy <[redacted]>

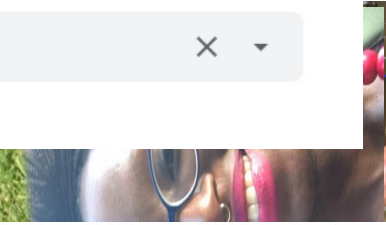
hellooo,

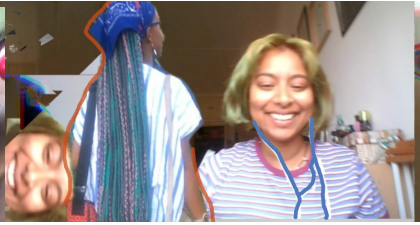
yho!! Fully agree on you with how, through witnessing:
a) ways the APC WRP team works remotely all the time, and
b) ways that MFI: Africa participants organise, and;
b) our own creation of this zine

having internet connection is a need, not a nicety. And, observing the ways people h
compromised folks, other groups of people more vulnerable to covid-19 infection an
abusive families/partners, is reassuring. New ways of showing up for each other – fo
predicated on our access to digital tools, infrastructure and the online space.

And, 2 answer ur question – being able to discuss, write, edit, design, co
been in different time zones and different continents has been amazing!
in the same country, and I though that was fraught enough :') but we've b
rigorous document through the power of wifi. We've translated hand-mad
something with a different spacial-temporality. That was unexpected, as
making of the zine. Co-sign wanting to do this again!







d, 18 Mar 2020 at 18:45, Wairimũ Murĩithi <[redacted]> wrote:
let me tell you!

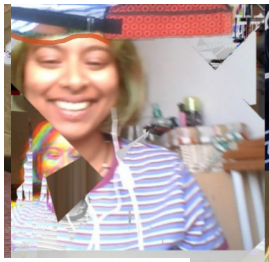
ncredible how quickly the lens through which we look at time changes so quickly. The other day, I saw a tweet that something like "I can't even remember what we used to talk about before coronavirus," and to be honest, I struggled it's trippy to think that we knew nothing of the virus during MFI: Africa, and now it seems to be everywhere, touching ything.

said, I think working on this zine has been quite timely. Obvs, we've known for ages how reliant we are on the net, but as physical distancing and remote working becomes increasingly necessary, I'm glad we've been able to pull off because of our conditions of connectivity. The urgency of these interesting times really emphasises the importance feminist internet -- I've seen incredible care work being organised online, on my Twitter feed and in Whatsapp groups I only wish it was more widespread, more accessible.

I hear you on feeling infantilised and undermined as a freelancer. As one of capitalism's many children, the gig omy is extremely exploitative, and very talented at making you feel like your lack of savings, lack of comprehensive hcare and precarious plans are all your fault. So it's been pretty great -- and at times, life-saving -- making this zine true labour of love. At the workshop, we learned the term 'free radicals' -- those of us who, for whatever personal and essional reasons, keep to ourselves, and float from consultancy to consultancy rather than committing to a single nisation -- and this process has shown me that there is a caring place for us in this work, too.

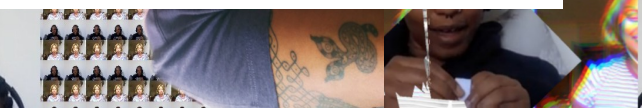
is, if COVID-19 and capitalism don't finally wipe us out 😬

t would you say that your most unexpected takeaway from all this was? Mine was the behind-the-scenes work of borative storytelling. I've curated and edited work before, but never with this scope of control and creative agency, 've never had emails and texts go out to so many parts of the world just to try bring them together in fun and rent threads the way we have. I'm proud of us. I want us to do this again.



have rallied around helping immuno-
d people who are shut-in with
or embodying intimacy – are largely

oach, reassure and gossip with you, while we've
With Ja. Magazine, we're in different provinces
been able to pull together a cohesive, beautiful,
le elements, IRL conversations and feelings into
we thought we'd be together, in person, for the



Reflecting on this process has been a tough thing to do – as so many things have changed, in a short space of time. For example, being at MFI: Africa showed me how big this continent is. Practically, I knew this. But as a South African without a valid passport, I didn't know how much I wanted to travel. In the time of covid-19 that seems, well – silly. But, after looking through the zine, that feeling found it's home, and highlighted how necessary interconnectedness is -- with or without travel bans.

Yes, the language of 'free radical' really helped my career glow-up, because I've *beeen* struggling to put words to what I do, without limiting the scope of my skills, interests and networks! I wanna know from one free radical to another – how did it feel like to be in the MFI: Africa space? For me, I was abit scared, shem. Having 0 institutional affiliations, and not knowing much about the intricacies of global, or continental feminist organising, I felt overwhelmed prior to the gathering. But through discussions, and chats over tea and smoke breaks, the intention came through: everyone is a voice of authority about their experiences, feelings and knowledges. That dissolved the anxieties I felt, and really led to lekke discussions and solutions that cut across borders (of all kinds!)

On Tue, 24 Mar 2020 at 02:30, Wairimũ Murĩithi <[redacted]> wrote:

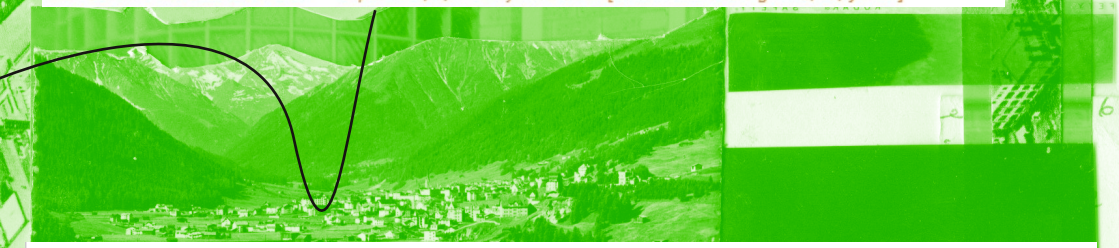
ok so first things first -- a thousand apologies for the delayed reply. The impact of COVID-19 on space and time has been heavy, and my brain and body seemed to have gone into a slow-down in protest...

As a migrant in South Africa, being at MFI: Africa was a really exciting and interesting time for me. It shouldn't have to be this way, still, but South African exceptionalism still shapes power dynamics across the continent, and it's something that frequently frustrates me when I'm in the presence of only South Africans. I've had the privilege of learning to code switch the language of my politics, but because power is as power does -- and I've had many family members call me out on this over the years -- I sometimes slip into a mental framework that seems to forget the range of experiences outside of the country that don't really resonate here. The chats that came up regarding race and African identity, for example, were a really important intervention, as were the more private ones on gender and pronouns -- it really highlights how we use the same internet, but at the same time, we do not, and the assumption of the same knowledge is something we need to be consistently interrogating from our different positions of relative power.

I cannot wait until we are finished with this project, first because I'm eager to see what we do next, and second because I am eager to share it. Even if we weren't working within deadlines and page limits, I know that the broad range of our work still has some things missing, many of which I learned about during the creation process. That's another thing that this experience has reminded me -- we never stop un/learning, we never stop growing. i wish we had more content on dis/ability rights and uses of technology, more on language diversity, more on feminist concerns on the environment. And I look forward to all feedback, because I know this is not the end of it. Collaboration, like consent, is a continuum, and while this zine documents the afterlives of MFI: Africa, those afterlives don't end at our back cover. I'm really hoping we get to do this work again, with writers and illustrators from the other iterations of Imagining and Making a Feminist Internet around the world. Imagine what a mega-sized project like that would look like 😍

Yours in free radicalling,
len 🐝

p.s. have you stretched ur body today?
p.p.s. This poem extract is from a friend's whatsapp, and I'd like 2 share it with u:
"There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police
We must love one another or die." — *September, 1, 1939* by W.H Auden ['twas written during WW2, so, ja neh]

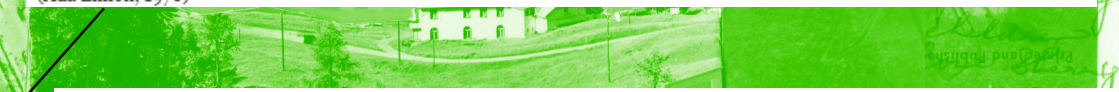


Yours right back,

Wairimu

and to send a poem excerpt right back, one I've been sitting with these last few weeks:

Say we spend our last moments staring
at each other, hands knotted together,
clutching the dog, watching the sky burn.
Say, It doesn't matter. Say, That would be
enough. Say you'd still want this: us alive,
right here, feeling lucky.
(Ada Limón, 1976)



hiii!

A mega-zine, ugh — beautiful 🐝🐳🌻🌺🌴

Limiting content to keep the zine feasible to print has been an issue I've also felt :(And, coming from the background of putting together a literary zine, I'd love to see photo series', flash fiction, more poetry and all those good things in how we document and reflect on a gathering such as this.
As you say: the afterlives of MFI: Africa don't end with the back cover of the zine!

But within the front and back covers are whole worlds — rich for interrogating, sitting with and connecting the contents to the strands of work we all do. From the practicalities of feminist movement-building, to platforming feminist organisations that are, and have been, doing the work to respond to threats and violence levered against women and queer (online) bodies on the continent, and in the diaspora. Plus, it includes the ground-breaking collaborative memory project, AKA the timeline of the internet, that was put together at MFI: Africa! Eeek!

Thank you for everything you've put into this zine, bbz. Truly could not have done it without you💥

yours in lockdown,
len🍫

FEMINIST